

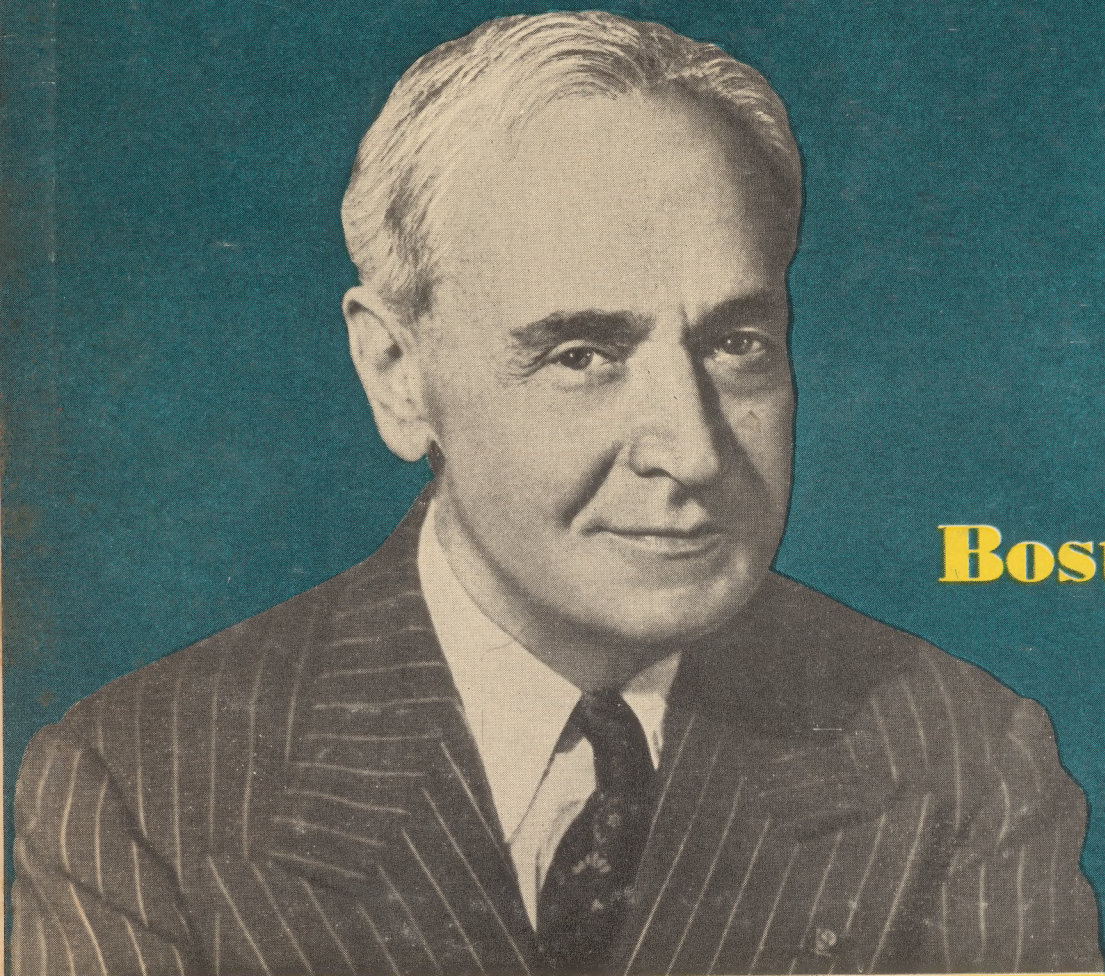
RCA VICTOR
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Beethoven

SYMPHONY No. 5

IN C MINOR, Op. 67



Boston Symphony Orchestra

Serge Koussevitzky

CONDUCTOR

Form 252720



Printed in U.S.A.

LONG

33 $\frac{1}{3}$

PLAY

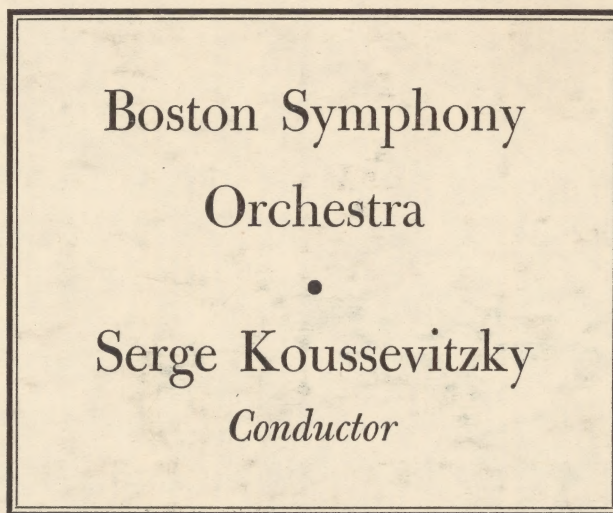
Beethoven SYMPHONY No. 5, IN C MINOR, Op. 67

Of Beethoven's nine symphonies, the *Fifth* has left the most prominent mark on the world of music; not only is it performed more widely than any of the master's works, but it is probably the best known and most universally appreciated symphony in existence. Beethoven annexed no descriptive program to the *Fifth*. Some years after its completion, Anton Schindler, one of the composer's devoted friends and biographers, questioned him as to the meaning of the first movement. "Thus fate knocks at the door," was the cryptic answer. The word *fate*, with its enormous possibilities, was destined to an eternal association with this music.

Even had Schindler not seized upon Beethoven's quick reply and immortalized it, had annotators through the years not propagated the *victory-through-struggle* concept of the symphony's development, the *Fifth* would most certainly deal its massive impact and kindle the imagination. For its program is inherent in the music itself. The emotional pattern—clear and concise—is accessible to all. The opening four-note statement of fierce declamation—a figure that permeates the symphony in varying forms—has become known as the *Fate* motive. Its thunderous rhythm marches relentlessly through dynamic struggle, pauses for an interlude of noble meditation, renews itself energetically for battle, gathering forces finally for a triumphant and almost overwhelming victory.

The composition process of the *Fifth* was a long and tedious one. Beethoven's sketch-books reveal years of painful working and reworking over material for a C Minor Symphony. The bulk of these sketches (for the first three movements) is dated 1800 and 1801, and some go as far back as 1795. In 1804 Beethoven began to shape the work seriously and he labored on it for two years. Then for some reason he put it aside for a B-Flat Symphony, to be published later as No. 4. The *Fifth*, dedicated to Prince von Lobkowitz and Count Rasoumovsky, was probably completed late in 1807 and was first performed on December 22, 1808.

The première had been announced five days previously by the composer himself in a detailed notice appearing in the *Wiener Zeitung*. A concert composed exclusively



of new works by Ludwig van Beethoven would take place at the Theater an der Wien and would commence at half past six o'clock. Boxes and reserved seats would be on sale in his rooms in the Krugerstrasse. The program—of outlandish length—would consist of the following items:

"First Part. 1. A Symphony entitled: 'A Recollection of Country Life,' in F Major (No. 5). 2. Aria. 3. Hymn with Latin text, composed in the Church style with chorus and solos. 4. Pianoforte Concerto played by Beethoven himself."

"Second Part. 1. Grand Symphony in C Minor (No. 6). 2. Holy, with Latin text, composed in the Church style with chorus and solos. 3. Fantasia for pianoforte which culminates in the gradual entrance of the whole orchestra and at the end with the introduction of choruses as a finale."

The *Fifth* and *Sixth Symphonies* (with their numbers transposed), the glorious *Fourth Piano Concerto*, the *Choral Fantasy* for piano, chorus and orchestra (foreshadowing the *Ninth Symphony*, the *Sanctus* from the Mass in C, the aria, *Ah Perfido* and a Latin hymn all on one program would be unheard of in this day. And in the year 1808, in Vienna, where Beethoven reigned as misunderstood musical lion, such an event was hardly successful. The epoch-making works had been poorly rehearsed, the chorus and orchestra were frightful, the performers and Beethoven were infuriated with each other, the concert hall was cold and the audience was

exhausted.

The C Minor work, lost somewhere in the shuffle, was reported to be "a big symphony, much worked out and very long." The bare simplicity of its opening motive proved so startling that some among its first listeners burst out laughing! Later, under more advantageous circumstances, the sharp impact of the *Fifth* was warmly shared by contemporaries of Beethoven. According to Goethe: "One expected the house to fall about one's ears." And the composer Lesueur burst forth to the young Berlioz, ". . . It has so upset and bewildered me that when I wanted to put on my hat, *I could not find my head!*"

The *Fifth Symphony* emerged during a period of disorder and loneliness for its composer. The deafness that gradually increased was doing its damage to this tortured soul, depriving him of the possibilities for a normal life. But from this personal, early struggle had come the first symphonies, the Op. 18 Quartets, the first four piano concertos and sonatas. Sketches for the *Fifth Symphony* reveal in themselves a complete battle of plan, rejection, rebuilding and final success. They bear testimony to Robert Schumann's statement: "Just so that genius exists it matters little how it appears, whether in the depths, as with Bach; on the heights, as with Mozart; or simultaneously in the depths and on the heights, as with Beethoven."

The stirring first movement of the *C Minor Symphony*, built upon the immortal four-note rhythm, is marked *Allegro con brio*. The second, in the key of A-Flat Major, is a double theme with variations and is indicated *Andante con moto*. Violoncellos and violas sing out its lovely familiar melody, and woodwinds and strings later continue it. The second theme appears in the clarinets and bassoons. Three variations and a coda round out the movement. Then comes the uncanny *Scherzo* (*Allegro, C Minor*), with a *Trio* section that reminded Berlioz of "the gambols of a frolicsome elephant." Repetition of the first portion of the *Scherzo* leads to a bridge passage, an expanding pedal-note in the drums that forms the transition from the *Scherzo* to the victory march of the *Finale* (*Allegro, C Major*).

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Beethoven

SYMPHONY No. 5, IN C MINOR, Op. 67

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1021
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SIDE
1

Band 1—First Movement: Allegro con brio
Band 2—Second Movement: Andante con moto

Boston Symphony Orchestra
Serge Koussevitzky, Conductor

D9-LRC-9039

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LONG PLAY
33 1/3

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Beethoven
SYMPHONY No. 5, IN C MINOR, Op. 67

Third Movement: Allegro
Fourth Movement: Allegro

Boston Symphony Orchestra
Serge Koussevitzky, Conductor

LM
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SIDE
2

LONG PLAY
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